THE LAMP SHADE

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LESSON EIGHTEEN

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Long before gas lamps and electroliers were used lamp shades were thought of, through sheer necessity. The early examples we find are very crude of design, as metal was largely used in their making. It was not until Louis XIV of France moved his court to the palace of Versailles that a distinct period style of furnishings was introduced, and silk shades trimmed in gold and festoons of artificial flowers became the vogue. Those shades were copied and their designs improved up to the days of Marie Antoinette, the unhappy and martyred queen of France. Her taste for ribbons, pillows, and finery was so keen that she made her apartments resplendent with objets d'art of all descriptions. Candlesticks and beautifully designed shades played a very conspicuous part in that artistic scheme of decoration, and are copied to the present day for their individuality, taste, and good lines.

The lamp shades and candlesticks that match the different period styles are too restricted in design, and do not offer the commercial possibilities of the less elaborate shade of modern design.

Glass shades have been designed and some are in very good taste; their conception is truly an achievement, but it must be remembered that they will chip or crack at the slightest blow and their replacement becomes a matter of conjecture.

During the "Empire" and "Directoire" periods of Napoleon's regime, the lamp shades grew in size and popularity. Slightly slanted and almost gigantic sides are the characteristics of that "overdone" period.

The floor lamp of today calls for a large shade and owing to this fact, a number of this particular pattern are in use.

Being a necessity more than a vogue, they were given practical thought by some of our best decorators. The shades that go with period styles, are still in fashion, but they are too extreme to suit the average taste — perhaps the purse — of the prospective buyer.

Some material had to be selected that would be inexpensive and effective and yet which could be treated so as to make it harmonious with the decorative scheme of any room. So the parchment lamp shade was originated for its wearing qualities and great possibilities as an asset to the decorative scheme of a room.

The popularity of Parchment Lamp Shades is largely due to the appeal they make for their color-scheme possibilities, and attractiveness of design. They may be decorated artistically, and their usefulness is manifold — for candlesticks, boudoir, table, and floor lamps; in fact, wherever a touch of light and color is desired to complete the decorative scheme of a room.

They are rapidly replacing silk lamp shades for their originality and decorative possibilities and, incidentally, for their sanitary qualities, for it will not be denied that Silk Shades, even of the most expensive material, will fade and at their best are hard to clean, for the dust will settle in their gatherings.

Cretonnes and wall paper will furnish a world of attractive suggestions, when a true matching of the color scheme of a room is desired.

Water colors and oil colors are the mediums used in the decorative scheme of parchment shades. Water colors are the more transparent and will produce the more delicate colorings.

However, water colors are not washable and their practicability is thus impaired. Shades painted in oil colors will outlast the delicately decorated shade in water colors, and I would advise you therefore to use oils. Water colors are, comparatively, used but little.

Wonderful effects may be produced at but a small outlay of time and money by painting parchment shades. This particular painting will not require training and if instructions are followed very good results will be obtained.

This work will be best done before the shade is mounted on a frame. The top of any table may be used to advantage. A drawing board

will also furnish a very satisfactory surface to work on.

A piece of paper should be laid upon the shade while you are painting. The oil colors may be thinned a great deal, or they may be used directly from the tubes. If they are used directly from the tubes they must be rubbed into the parchment as explained below. The mixing of different colors may be done with a palette knife on your palette.

I find it a very successful procedure to trace my design first of all and to outline it immediately afterward with a fine pen and black India ink. After this has dried, I apply the background, and as India ink is waterproof there is no danger of my eliminating the design in the process of applying the background, or in removing the surplus paint within the outlines of the design. Black enamel and your smallest brush may be used instead of the ink for outlining.

The color used for a background is a matter of choice. It would be well for you to re-read the lesson on color harmony. This will recall to your mind some important points.

The background tints may be applied with a large brush, and rubbed well into the parchment with a cloth slightly moistened with turpentine. Or, the colors may be applied with a rag, or squeezed directly from the tube to the parchment. An unevenly placed tint will give a very pretty effect to the shade, and wherever a large space is devoid of a design will fill in and almost form a design in itself. A dark color blending into lighter tones will afford a very attractive shading effect. Very pleasing results may be obtained by tinting the inside of shades. I might mention as especially attractive the use of greens, oranges, blues, tans, and pinks, or old rose. This tinting again should show unevenness and I know of no better way to produce this effect than to use a wad of cotton covered with coarse material, as cheesecloth, or heavy linen.

The light will be softer and more charming coming through the stippled and uneven color than when this color is smooth. A good understanding of oil colors and their proper mixing to obtain additional shades will be found invaluable and necessary.

When the oils are to be applied thinly, it is advisable to add a large amount of turpentine. It is safer for the amateur than linseed oil which dries very slowly. Turpentine makes an oil color dry more rapidly; and it also lightens it, and therefore takes the place of white. Chinese white and Flake white are opaque and should not be used. Allow the natural parchment to show where a unit is numbered 27.

When the paints are used directly from the tubes, they should be rubbed in with a little piece of cloth barely dampened with turpentine. A small amount of cotton wrapped around the end of a toothpick can also be used.

The following oil colors will be found very satisfactory and will afford a range of shades that will amply suffice for the decorating of any parchment lamp shade:

Antwerp Blue and Black make an Indigo Blue.

Emerald Green is necessary for bright spots, the high lights on leaves, for example. A wide range of greens may be obtained by the mixing of Antwerp Blue and Yellow. Black may be used for darkening them.

Burnt Sienna mixed with New Blue will form pure Gray.

Chrome yellow is used for high lights. Its transparency makes it very useful when a light spot is desired.

Orange is transparent, and warm in color. It may be used to advantage when combined with Tans, Browns, and Scarlet. This color may be used for autumn shades and affords a perfect harmony.

Yellow may be used for tinting in the background and the inside of the shade.

Carmine is a brilliant color, Scarlet a good color, but not as brilliant as the former, and Crimson Lake is the least brilliant of the three.

These colors may all be blended individually, and will produce a wealth of tones and shades.

It is very important that the colors should be kept transparent. A drop of linseed oil will do wonders in keeping them in that state. However, it must be borne in mind that linseed oil is a very slow drying medium. Some of the great masters who were perfect in technique, used to allow paintings on which linseed oil had been used profusely a whole year to dry. So, do not use great quantities of this oil and expect your shade to dry in a few minutes. A little is necessary; too much is ruinous. Let me also caution you to use your paint sparingly. A thick coat is unattractive. Make a little paint go a long way.

The bright colors of flowers and their varied shades will show contrast by making some of the flowers light and some dark, and very pretty effects will result. The same is true of leaves.

In landscapes the objects nearer to the eye, say a tree, a road, or a building, should contain the most color. Objects in the distance should be shown in less distinct tints.

A very effective design may be produced by painting the background in black and the design in brilliant colors, although it is advisable to have quite a large design, or a series of small ones, as black is an opaque color, and too much background painted in that color would kill the transparency of this shade.

All parchment shades listed in our materials catalog come flat. They are thus much easier to paint. After they are decorated the ends must be glued together and the shade must be bent to the frame. Le Page's glue, or Fish glue are the best for this purpose.

Apply the glue evenly to the inside of one edge. Lay the edge flat on the table, bend the shade in a circle, and bring the other edge down into the glue. It should overlap one-quarter inch. Rub the two edges together with a soft cloth, then lay a heavy weight along the glued edge.

With each circular or oval frame two steel rings are furnished. These are to be sewed to the inside of the top and bottom with heavy thread, while tape may be used to bind over the wire if gold braid is to be added. The frame is now finished, unless you wish to sew gold braid around the edges to cover up the stitches. This is effective. Some shades have no edging whatsoever, the decorator relying on a band of thick and opaque color to give the shade the desired finishing touch.

A most effective way of decorating parchment shades is by the use of minute crystals. These give a shadowy, lustrous appearance that is very attractive. The shade is painted as described above, but after it has dried it is given a coat of varnish and when that has reached a sticky consistency, it is sprinkled heavily with these wee crystals. (They are listed in the catalog with the other artists' supplies.)

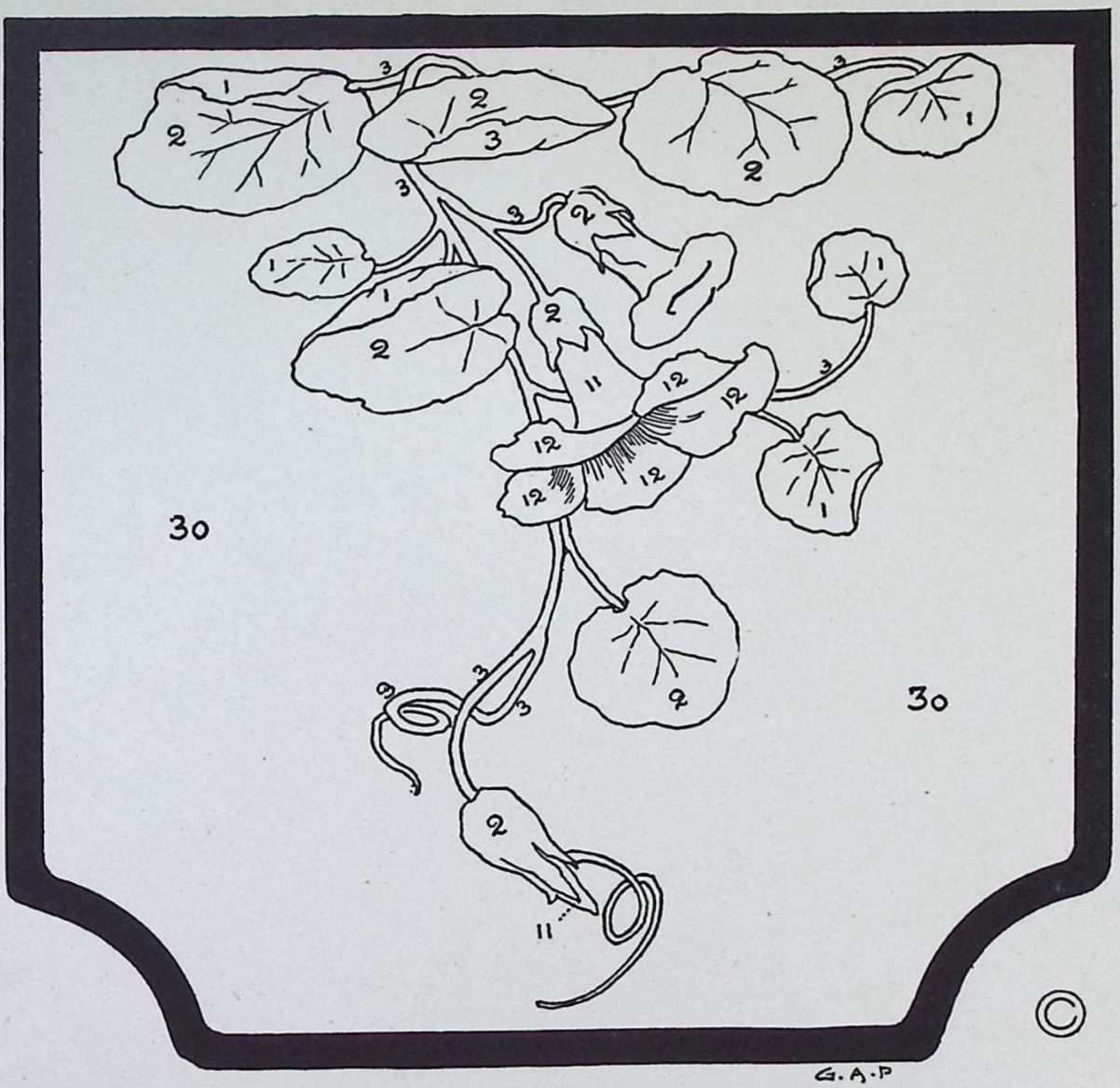
The first plate accompanying this lesson (Plate 1) shows a design for a parchment shield. I have treated this motif in a naturalistic manner. The colors I have selected are bright but their intensity will be greatly reduced by a grayed yellow background. The pure black used as a border will form a pleasing frame around the motif and give it "snap."

Plate 2 shows a design for a parchment shade which will prove effective through the plainness of its motif and a unique combination of colors. The severity of the black lines will be relieved by the gold braid at the top and bottom of the shade and the touch of color furnished by the motif itself.

You will trace and paint these two designs on parchment paper and use oil colors for the flowers and leaves and black enamel for all black bands. Outline the various forms on these plates.

Gabriel André Petit

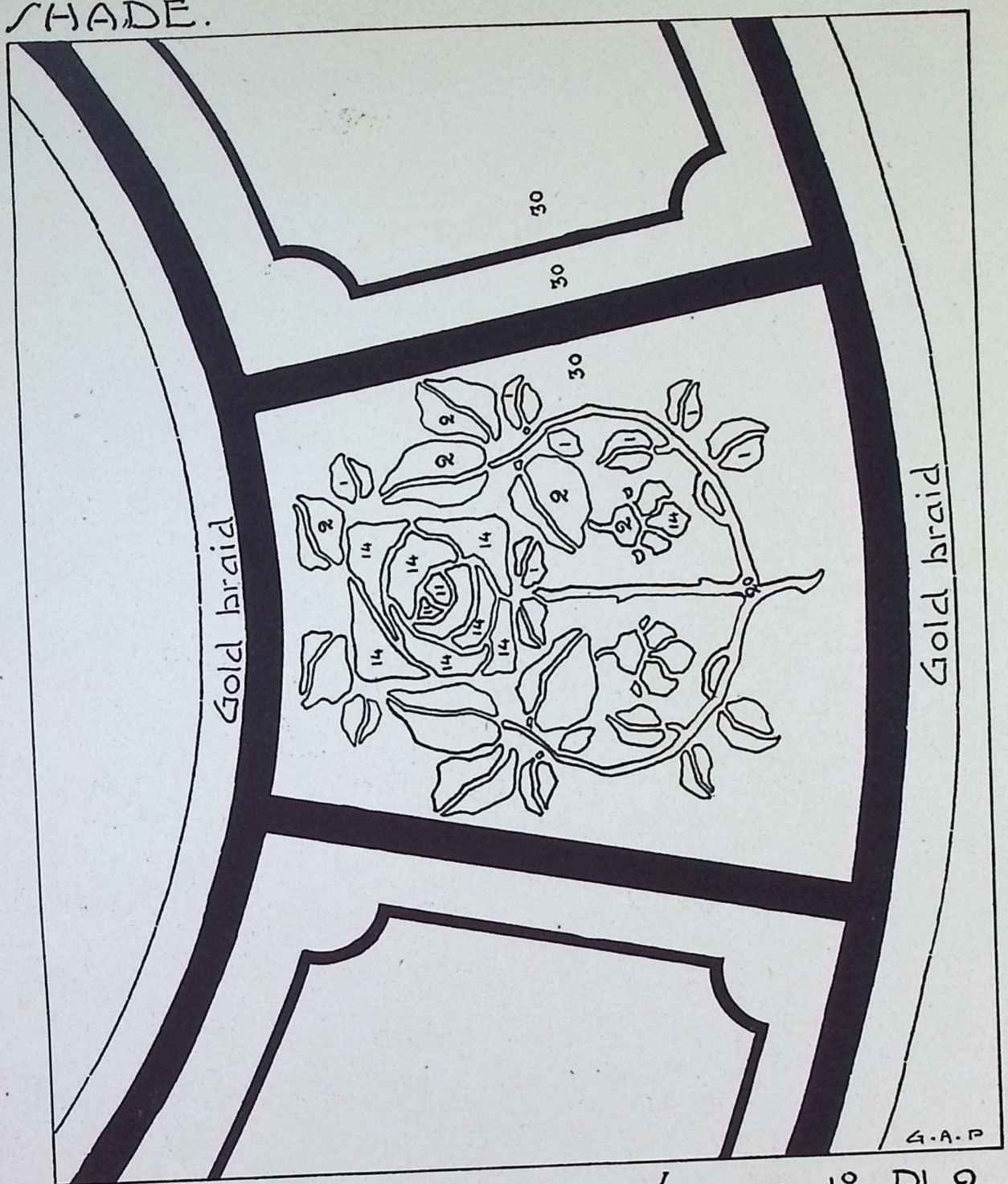
The SHIELD.



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Lesson 18
Plate 1

SHADE.



Lesson 18. Pl. 2

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"Many members begin decorating giftwares and objets d'art after finishing only a few lessons. Others prefer to finish more lessons and more subjects in order to decorate giftwares in a greater variety and in a more salable manner. In any case you should finish at least six or more lessons before requesting the lessons which have to do with merchandising and how to make money. These lessons will be sent to you automatically when you have finished the tenth lesson on the subject of Enameling Furniture. The lessons on merchandising or how to make money are numbered as follows: 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 20, 23, 26, and 28."

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